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NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN
FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATION

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POLE PRODUCTION DOWN IN 1950 1/

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In the Northern Rocky Mountain Region2/ 390,000 transmission poles were produced in 1950, 35 percent less than in 1949 (table 2). The pole market slumped in late 1949 and did not recover until early summer 1950. It was early fall before greater quantities of poles began to reach the market. The greatest decline was in North Idaho where the output was down 40 percent. Montana produced 33 percent less than in 1949, and Northeast Washington 20 percent less. Production of western redcedar was only off 24 percent, while lodgepole pine and western larch were down 41 percent and 50 percent, respectively. Douglas-fir, the least popular pole species, was the only one to show an increase and was up 59 percent.

Table 1. Number of poles produced in 1950

Species	Northern Rocky Mountain Region				Percent of total
	Montana	N. Idaho	N. E. Washington	Total	
	Number of poles				Percent
Lodgepole pine	90,842	1,200	296	92,338	23.7
Western redcedar	11,016	151,850	54,183	217,049	55.6
Western larch	39,003	27,170	5,478	71,651	18.4
Douglas-fir	7,612	190	1,268	9,070	2.3
Total	148,473	180,410	61,225	390,108	-
Percent	38.1	46.2	15.7	100.0	100.0

1/ The Rocky Mountain Pole and Treating Association sponsored the survey of pole production for 1950. All of the pole producing companies reported their production. The cooperation of these companies in supplying the data is acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

2/ The Northern Rocky Mountain Region includes Montana, Idaho north of the Salmon River, and Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Whitman Counties in Northeast Washington.

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Western redcedar continues to be the popular pole tree, accounting for 56 percent of the 1950 harvest. Of the remainder, 24 percent was lodgepole, 18 percent western larch, and 2 percent Douglas-fir. Western redcedar is also the popular pole material in the large sizes with 40 percent of its production in A.S.A. class 1 through 4, and 40 percent in lengths of 40 feet and longer. Lodgepole pine is the characteristically small pole tree; 91 percent of its production was in lengths of 35 feet and under, and 88 percent in A.S.A. classes 6 through 10. Of the western larch poles produced, 87 percent was in lengths 40 feet and shorter and 82 percent in A.S.A. classes 4 through 7. Douglas-fir followed a similar pattern of distribution; 88 percent of its production was in lengths 40 feet and shorter and 85 percent in the same A.S.A. classes. Of the total regional production, including all species, 81 percent was in lengths 40 feet and under and 76 percent in A.S.A. classes 4 through 7.

Table 2. Comparison of pole production by species, 1949 and 1950

Species	1949	1950	Percent change
	--Number of pieces--		Percent
Lodgepole pine	186,262	92,338	-50.4
Western redcedar	286,116	217,049	-24.1
Western larch	121,214	71,651	-40.9
Douglas-fir	5,720	9,070	+58.6
Total	599,312	390,108	-34.9

The Northern Rocky Mountain Region normally produces about 8 percent of the nation's poles. While in the aggregate this appears small, pole production is an integral part of the regional forest economy. Western redcedar which grows as an associated species in the white pine type is normally in good demand. There are also considerable amounts of western larch and lodgepole pine of commercial pole sizes available as the demand for them develops.

Table 3. Classification of 1950 pole production by A.S.A. class, length, and species

Northern Rocky Mountain Region

Pole length	A.S.A. class 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	All
Feet	Percent of total										
Lodgepole pine											
25 & under	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.09	1.08	3.12	3.09	0.41	2.31	0.25	10.42
30	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.07	1.18	11.70	23.39	0.22	0.04	0	36.68
35	0.01	0.05	0.60	1.29	3.22	17.05	21.28	0.08	0	0	43.58
40	0.02	0.11	0.95	0.85	1.11	3.32	0	0	0	0	6.36
45	0.01	0.10	0.39	0.32	0.36	1.40	0	0	0	0	2.58
50	-	0.05	0.13	0.02	0.01	0	0	0	0	0	0.21
55 & over	-	0.05	0.10	0.02	-	0	0	0	0	0	0.17
All	0.08	0.38	2.26	2.66	6.96	36.59	47.76	0.71	2.35	0.25	100.00
Western redcedar											
25 & under	0.09	0.10	0.24	0.37	0.53	1.91	1.87	2.16	3.44	0.29	11.00
30	0.16	0.34	0.55	1.31	3.46	5.40	6.47	1.22	0.27	-	19.18
35	0.33	0.63	1.49	4.09	8.84	8.24	6.04	0.35	-	0	30.01
40	0.33	0.95	2.37	5.68	5.04	2.25	0.20	0	0	0	16.82
45	0.41	0.76	1.81	2.60	1.72	0.13	0	0	0	0	7.43
50	0.41	1.13	1.68	2.08	0.18	-	0	0	0	0	5.48
55 & over	1.50	3.76	3.04	1.74	0.04	0	-	0	0	0	10.08
All	3.23	7.67	11.18	17.87	19.81	17.93	14.58	3.73	3.71	0.29	100.00
Western larch											
25 & under	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.24	0.47	0.81	2.94	0.05	1.18	0.18	6.01
30	0.06	0.08	0.11	0.62	3.51	11.83	15.12	0.03	0.20	0	31.56
35	0.08	0.13	0.86	2.95	10.07	12.22	8.50	-	0	0	34.81
40	0.07	0.26	2.11	4.62	5.37	2.27	0.01	0	0	0	14.71
45	0.04	0.17	0.84	1.83	0.77	0.05	0	0	0	0	3.70
50	0.13	0.40	0.89	0.59	0.15	0	0	0	0	0	2.16
55 & over	1.73	2.47	2.35	0.48	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	7.05
All	2.14	3.55	7.23	11.33	20.36	27.18	26.57	0.08	1.38	0.18	100.00
Douglas-fir											
25 & under	0	0	0	0	0.14	0.20	1.11	0	0	0	1.45
30	0.09	0.35	0.74	1.90	1.84	9.53	12.77	0	0	0	27.22
35	0.22	1.32	1.55	10.24	11.74	19.80	1.51	0	0	0	46.38
40	0.78	1.22	1.70	5.17	3.12	0.73	0	0	0	0	12.72
45	0.10	0.45	0.95	1.34	0.31	0.06	0	0	0	0	3.21
50	0.24	0.63	1.36	0.59	0.03	0	0	0	0	0	2.85
55 & over	1.48	2.62	1.86	0.21	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.17
All	2.91	6.59	8.16	19.45	17.18	30.32	15.39	0	0	0	100.00
All species											
25 & under	0.06	0.08	0.18	0.30	0.59	1.89	2.19	1.54	2.86	0.26	9.95
30	0.13	0.25	0.42	1.03	3.09	7.38	10.43	0.86	0.22	-	23.81
35	0.24	0.49	1.26	3.65	8.25	10.41	8.58	0.25	-	0	33.13
40	0.26	0.73	2.10	4.79	4.45	2.38	0.14	0	0	0	14.85
45	0.28	0.56	1.44	2.11	1.35	0.31	0	0	0	0	6.05
50	0.31	0.85	1.32	1.52	0.15	-	0	0	0	0	4.15
55 & over	1.31	2.99	2.47	1.26	0.03	0	-	0	0	0	8.06
All	2.59	5.95	9.19	14.66	17.91	22.37	21.34	2.65	3.08	0.26	100.00

Dash indicates less than 0.01 percent; zero, no production.

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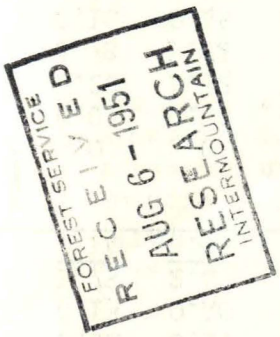

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